

T&E COMMITTEE # 1
October 4, 2004

MEMORANDUM

September 30, 2004

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee
FROM: ^{GO} Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Staff Director
SUBJECT: Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line) Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study

At the direction of Governor Ehrlich, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) re-initiated the project planning study for the Bi-County Transitway, which would either be a light rail line or bus rapid transit (BRT) facility between Bethesda and New Carrollton. MTA is close to completing the first phase of project planning and soon will be deciding on the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS).

In preparation for MTA's decision, the Planning Board's staff has led an interagency staff group examining light rail options between Silver Spring and Langley Park, where the route would continue into Prince George's County. The Bethesda-to-Silver Spring route has been set for nearly 15 years in the County's master plan. However, while the East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans support the concept of a light rail line connecting the Silver Spring Central Business District to Langley Park at University Boulevard, these plans do not specify a particular route, nor do they identify specific locations for stops or other pertinent features.

The Planning staff recommends two light rail alignments between Silver Spring and Langley Park be carried forward as ARDS in the next phase of MTA's study. One alignment would reach the Flower Avenue/Piney Branch Road intersection primarily via Wayne Avenue, and the other would reach this intersection via Sligo Avenue and Piney Branch Road. Both alignments would have a stop at this intersection. Both alignments are the same from this intersection to the east, following Piney Branch Road to University Boulevard, and then along University Boulevard to Langley Park.

Due to physical constraints along the CSX right-of-way, the Planning staff also recommends re-studying options between Kansas Avenue (in Lyttonsville, just northwest of Rosemary Hills ES) and the Silver Spring Metro Station. One option would continue to have the tracks on the northeast side of the CSX right-of-way; the other would follow the CSX tracks along the southwest side.

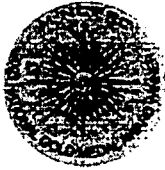
The Planning staff's report is on ©1-36. The staff report describes these options in more detail, and describes the public outreach conducted to date. The Planning Board is holding a public forum regarding these options on September 30; if the testimony from that forum is available in time, it will be forwarded to Councilmembers under separate cover prior to the worksession. On September 27 the Takoma Park City Council adopted a resolution supporting study of the two options between Silver Spring and Langley Park (©37-39).

If the Council concurs with studying these options (the Council will take up the Committee's recommendations during the Planning Board's Biannual Report on October 5), the Board and its staff will proceed over the next year or two developing a draft master plan that would ultimately recommend an alignment, stop locations, and other pertinent features of the light rail line. This work will be done in parallel and in concert with MTA's next, more detailed phase of project planning. Included in the Planning Board's scope of work would be to recommend land use and zoning changes (if any) deemed appropriate at the stop locations.

Council staff recommendation: Recommend these alternatives to the Maryland Transit Administration as ARDS to carry forward in the next phase of project planning for the Bi-County Transitway.

Planning staff will be on hand to brief the Committee.

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

MCPB
ITEM NO. 1
9-30-04

September 24, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief
Countywide Planning Division

John Carter, Chief
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Alex Hekimian: 301-495-4525, and Margaret Rifkin: 301-495-4583, for the
Department of Park and Planning *AH-MRK*

SUBJECT: Purple Line (Bi-County Transitway) Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study

RECOMMENDATION

Transmit to the Montgomery County Council the following general recommendation and accompanying specifics regarding the potential Purple Line (Bi-County Transitway) Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS):

Move forward for detailed study two alternative alignments for a double-track (one track in each direction) light-rail line in an exclusive transitway in Montgomery County - one alternative that includes the Wayne Avenue corridor and another alternative that includes the Sligo Avenue corridor, as shown in Exhibit A.

Within Montgomery County, a 4.4-mile segment on the west end and a 0.6-mile segment on the east end of the two alignments would be common to both alternatives, as follows:

1. **West Segment (Georgetown Branch Light Rail between Bethesda and Silver Spring)**

- For the segment from the Bethesda Central Business District eastward to the CSX railroad tracks near Kansas Avenue, run the light-rail line on the master plan alignment in the Georgetown Branch right-of-way. The State's earlier concept of using the Jones Bridge Road corridor for a portion of this segment for bus rapid transit was opposed by the Planning Board and County Council last year and therefore should not proceed to further detailed study.
- For the segment adjacent to the CSX railroad tracks, between Kansas Avenue and Spring Street, analyze the following two variations:
 - Run the light-rail line along the master plan alignment and through a new tunnel under the CSX tracks to reach and then proceed along the north side of the CSX tracks, or
 - Run the light-rail line along the south side of the CSX tracks.

2. **East Segment (between Flower Avenue area and Takoma-Langley Crossroads)**

- Eastward from the Flower Avenue area where Arliss Street intersects with Piney Branch Road, run the light-rail line on Piney Branch Road, then turn right onto University Boulevard leading to Takoma-Langley Crossroads.

In the approximately two-mile central segment between the common west and east segments, there is a choice of running the light-rail line on either of two alternative alignments – one that uses the Wayne Avenue corridor or another that uses the Sligo Avenue corridor. The different components for these two alternative light-rail alignments are as follows:

1. **Wayne Avenue Corridor**

Where the transitway enters the Silver Spring Central Business District from the northwest, between Spring Street and Georgia Avenue, analyze the following two variations:

- From either the north side of the CSX tracks or via a bridge from the south side of the CSX tracks, connect the light-rail line to Second Avenue, run it on a new overpass at Colesville Road and then land it on Wayne Avenue with a station at the northern edge of the Silver Spring Transit Center, or
- From either the north side of the CSX tracks or via a bridge from the south side of the tracks, elevate the light-rail line along the north side and high enough above the CSX tracks so that the light-rail line does not interfere with CSX operations and also avoids the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building; provide access through the southwestern edge of the Silver Spring Transit Center next to the Metro and CSX tracks, as in the master plan, and then loop back to Wayne Avenue by running the light-rail line on the Ripley Street and Georgia Avenue rights-of-way.

Between Georgia Avenue and Takoma-Langley Crossroads, run the light-rail line on Wayne Avenue until just past Sligo Creek, where it would transition into a new tunnel, run under a neighborhood and Flower Avenue, surface on Arliss Street, and then turn onto Piney Branch Road.

2. Sligo Avenue Corridor

From Spring Street to Takoma-Langley Crossroads, analyze the following:

- Run the light-rail line in an elevated section on the north side of the CSX tracks, provide a station within the Silver Spring Transit Center, then continue parallel to the CSX tracks in a southeasterly direction until turning to enter a new tunnel under Georgia Avenue, surface on Sligo Avenue, and then stay on Sligo Avenue until making a turn onto Piney Branch Road.

Light-rail Stations

- Provide stations at the following locations, which would be common to both alternative light-rail alignments, as shown in Exhibit A: Bethesda, Chevy Chase Lake/Connecticut Avenue, Lyttonsville, Woodside/16th Street, Silver Spring, Flower Avenue, and Takoma-Langley Crossroads.
- Examine the feasibility of adding the following potential future stations which would be common to both alternative light-rail routes, as shown in Exhibit A: East-West Highway, Jones Mill Road, Spring Street, Clifton Park, and Carroll Avenue.
- For the alignment that uses Wayne Avenue, examine the feasibility of adding potential future stations at Fenton Street and at Sligo Creek.
- For the alignment that uses Sligo Avenue, examine the feasibility of adding potential future stations at Fenton Street and Dale Drive.

Pedestrian/Cycling Trails

Evaluate possibilities for fully incorporating the Capital Crescent Trail, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and the future Silver Spring Green Trail into the design of any transit alignment.

DISCUSSION

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is in the process of conducting a study of the proposed Purple Line through Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. MTA is evaluating the feasibility of a 14-mile transitway project from Bethesda to New Carrollton. The study, which the State calls the Bi-County Transitway Study, began in the Fall of 2003, and is now at the stage where MTA will be selecting Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS). This is the appropriate time, before MTA produces its draft ARDS report, for the Planning Board and the County Council to provide input to MTA on the alternatives that should be carried forward for detailed study.

Exhibit B shows all of the alternatives that MTA is still currently considering. MTA will be selecting a subset of those alternatives and including them in the ARDS report.

Both the Planning Board and the County Council have previously emphasized to MTA the importance of advancing a light-rail project on the Georgetown Branch right-of-way and eastward through Montgomery County on a feasible corridor to the Takoma-Langley Crossroads area. Since the County's master plans and the Washington region's long-range plans already include a Georgetown Branch light-rail transitway, the focus should now be on the remainder of the project along the CSX tracks and east of the Silver Spring Central Business District.

The objectives of the alternative alignments are to provide a cost-effective light-rail transitway that significantly improves the quality of east-west transit travel for as many people as possible and at the same time minimizes negative impacts on adjacent communities. To be cost-effective, the alignment should be primarily on surface, but there are combinations of elevated and subsurface segments, including some that are suggested in this memorandum, that can help meet those objectives. In addition, MTA should take special care in incorporating the Capital Crescent Trail, Metropolitan Branch Trail, and Silver Spring Green Trail into the designs of the transitway to create a multi-modal transportation corridor.

Two Recommended Alternative Light-rail Alignments

As requested by the County Council, staff worked closely with the State's study team, analyzed all of the light-rail and bus rapid transit alternatives that MTA has been considering (see Exhibit B), and met with community groups to inform them about the project and to get feedback. Based on the work performed thus far, staff recommends that the ARDS report include at least two double-track, light-rail alternative alignments in exclusive transitways. One that includes the Wayne Avenue corridor, and another that includes the Sligo Avenue corridor -- with a few variations within each alternative, in segments proceeding from west to east, as follows:

- Based on previous recent County decisions, a common element of both alternatives is light rail on the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, between the Bethesda Central Business District and the CSX railroad tracks.
- Light rail located next to the CSX tracks, between Kansas Avenue and Spring Street, is also a common element, but there are opportunities for placing the transitway on either the north or south side of the tracks, so both of those options deserve to be studied. The placement of the line on the master plan alignment (north side of the CSX tracks) has become more problematic. CSX is insisting on a greater separation between the light-rail line and the CSX tracks, thus causing negative impacts on the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building in that vicinity.
- As light rail continues eastward, there is the alternative of using either Wayne Avenue or Sligo Avenue. Staff believes that both alternative alignments need to be studied in order to better understand the pros and cons of each, and to eventually help make a decision on the best alternative.

To connect to the Wayne Avenue corridor there are several variations that deserve detailed study:

- To avoid the spatial constraints on the north side of the CSX tracks near the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building, there are two options:
 - Instead of running between the CSX tracks and the Silver Spring Metro Plaza, have the alignment turn onto Second Avenue and access the northern edge of the Silver Spring Transit Center and the Wayne Avenue corridor.
 - Build an elevated section partially over the CSX tracks to get past the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building, access the Silver Spring Transit Center on the southwestern side of the Center, and then loop back to the Wayne Avenue corridor via Ripley Street and Georgia Avenue.
- To avoid a steep grade after crossing Sligo Creek on Wayne Avenue, rather than continuing eastward up a lengthy hill on Wayne Avenue, there is the option of turning away from Wayne Avenue and putting the transitway in a new tunnel under a neighborhood and Flower Avenue and surfacing it onto Arliss Street in Long Branch.
- East of the intersection of Arliss Street and Piney Branch Road, light rail on Piney Branch Road and on University Boulevard should be a common element of both alternative alignments.

A challenge is to retrofit any kind of transportation project in an established, built-up community. Nevertheless, staff believes that there is good potential for such a light-rail line. Based on staff's analyses thus far, of two recommended alignments, the Wayne Avenue corridor appears to have the better characteristics. It has more available right-of-way, more suitable terrain for light rail, and a potentially larger market from which to draw transit customers. Both the Wayne Avenue and Sligo Avenue alignments should be carried forward as alternatives retained for detailed study so that the two can be compared with more rigorous evaluations.

Other Alternatives Considered

Staff examined many other light-rail and bus rapid transit alternatives that have been included in the State's study as a result of the study's scoping process. The transit alignments under review by the State are shown in Exhibit B. Staff also examined additional alternatives that do not appear in Exhibit B.

Access to Montgomery College

Staff considered a second alignment to Montgomery College, which differed from the one the MTA studied. Staff looked at one that would extend to the College then proceed to Piney Branch Road and continue northward. This alignment was different from the MTA alternative, which was rejected because it ran through the City of Takoma Park on East West Highway and had a negative impact on its historic district as well as on other neighborhoods. This second alternative was eliminated because it duplicates other options for serving Montgomery College while adding to the length and cost of the Purple Line. It also runs through part of the historic district, with associated potential negative impacts. Other options for serving Montgomery College include a transitway under study by the District of Columbia, which would run up Georgia Avenue to the Silver Spring Central Business District. A stop to serve the College could be considered as part of that study. In addition, the Metro Red Line already passes through the center of the Montgomery College campus. The possibility of a Red Line station stop has also been discussed. Furthermore, the campus is currently served by buses on both sides of the campus, and will be within easy walking or biking distance along the Metropolitan Branch Trail to both the Silver Spring Station and the Takoma Park Station of the Red Line.

One-Way Pairs with Sligo Avenue

Staff also investigated the possibility of creating a one-way pair using either Silver Spring Avenue or Thayer Avenue with Sligo Avenue to reduce the number of lanes needed for traffic on Sligo Avenue. This would create more space on Sligo Avenue for the transitway and reduce impacts on residences and businesses along that route. This concept was rejected because Silver Spring Avenue is a neighborhood street, with steep inclines, an elementary school, and many single-family homes. Directing traffic to Silver Spring Avenue would have many negative impacts. Also, Thayer Avenue is too far from Sligo Avenue to function successfully as part of a one-way pair.

The Silver Spring Transit Center Along the Tracks with Alternate Loops to Wayne Avenue

Staff also investigated ways to maintain the transitway alignment through the Silver Spring Transit Center along the tracks, and then connect by various routes to Wayne Avenue. Options included looking at surface and underground routes following Ripley Street and then running up one of several other streets to reach Wayne Avenue. Fenton Street and Dixon Avenue were considered, as well as portions of Bonifant Street. Ripley Street to Georgia Avenue appeared to be the best route due to the greater right-of-way available on Georgia Avenue and the fewer number of turns required to connect with Wayne Avenue. The turns are likely to require additional engineering, affecting costs, and slower speeds, affecting travel time.

Staff evaluated all of the above light-rail and bus rapid transit alternatives and concluded that the Wayne Avenue Corridor and the Sligo Avenue Corridor light-rail alignments have the greatest potential. They are the best for the following reasons:

- They provide faster and more dependable service due to the fact that they are both light-rail transit in an exclusive right-of-way with a double track.

- They serve the Long Branch Community with a station at Flower Avenue and a possible station at Clifton Park – this community will benefit greatly from the revitalization potential that would result from new stations.
- They both connect to the Silver Spring Transit Center and to Takoma-Langley Crossroads.
- They both include options for serving neighborhoods that include multi-family residences with intermediate stations.
- They do not go through any historic districts.
- The light-rail mode is considered a more appealing one for riders. It is also attractive to developers, who prefer investing in station areas where there is an investment in a permanent rail line. The bus rapid transit alignments under review by MTA, on the other hand, are likely to have longer segments in mixed traffic, provide slower and lower quality service, and may result in reduced ridership. They also are not as inviting to developers because the bus service could be more easily discontinued at any time.
- A busway alignment up Colesville Road to Four Corners has previously been opposed by the County Council due to community impacts.
- A light-rail or busway tunnel from Sligo Avenue to University Boulevard would be too costly and it does not serve the Long Branch community.

Community Impacts of Recommended Alternative Alignments

This discussion is about the impacts of a primarily at-grade system and assumes an exclusive transitway. Tunnels, bridges, or other variations are possible to minimize community impacts and should be studied by the State in the next stage.

Both the Wayne Avenue and Sligo Avenue alternative alignments have a similar number of single-family homes adjacent to the existing right-of-way. They both have apartment buildings along them as well. Wayne Avenue has 70-150 feet of right-of-way, while Sligo Avenue has only 45-50 feet of right-of-way. Due to the fact that the Wayne Avenue alignment has a wider existing right-of-way, it is likely to have fewer negative impacts on existing households than the Sligo Avenue alignment. Further study will also need to address how best to maintain the Silver Spring Green Trail in the Wayne Avenue light-rail alignment. This will affect the amount of right-of-way needed and impacts on the adjacent communities.

Because there is less existing right-of-way along the Sligo Avenue alignment, there is likely to be a greater impact, including the reduction of the front yards of existing homes as well as making access more difficult. The Sligo Avenue alignment also includes a length along Piney Branch Road, which has two major inclines that may need to be reduced in steepness to accommodate the operations of light rail vehicles. For this reason, grade changes to the existing roadway requiring walls and more extensive grading are likely to be needed. This would affect the households along Piney Branch Road.

Some community impacts are positive. The Wayne Avenue alignment provides the possibility of two additional stations to serve the community. One could be in the Silver Spring Central Business District at Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street and serve as a convenient station for shopping and dining destinations. Another station could be near Sligo Creek and serve Silver Spring International School, the nearby high rise apartments and the regional Sligo Creek Park Trail.

The Sligo Avenue alignment provides the possibility of two additional stations as well. One station could be at Fenton Street, which would be a few blocks from Montgomery College. The other station could be on Piney Branch Road at the neighborhood commercial center at the Dale Drive intersection.

An evaluation of the number of households within walking distance of these stations should be done in the next stage of the State's study. The stations would also be evaluated in terms of impacts on travel time and ridership.

Both alternative alignments raise issues concerning land use. Each alignment passes through single-family residential neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to the Silver Spring Central Business District. The impacts on the single-family homes adjacent to the transitway may result in pressure to convert the homes to business uses. In addition, any new station locations recommended along either alignment should be evaluated to either confirm the existing land use or recommend modifications.

Impacts on Parks: Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park

Both alternative alignments cross Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park. Both alignments also have a stretch of parkland adjacent to the right-of-way. For the Wayne Avenue alignment, there is parkland extending along the north side that is also used by the Silver Spring International School. It extends approximately one block. Along the Sligo Avenue alignment there is parkland along Piney Branch Road that extends from Dale Drive to just past Sligo Creek. For each alignment, the existing bridge across Sligo Creek would probably need to be re-engineered and widened.

Community Impacts of the Options for Entering the Silver Spring CBD from the Northwest

There are several options under consideration for bringing the light-rail transitway into the Silver Spring CBD from the Brookville Road area. They fall into two main groups: those that run along the north side of the CSX tracks and those that run along the south side.

Each group comes with its own set of additional characteristics involving below grade, at-grade and elevated portions, including possibly stacking of a trail above the rail. At this stage, for the purposes of describing possible community impacts, staff's analysis has assumed that the alignments would be primarily at-grade.

North Side Option

This option affects the households and businesses along the north side of the tracks between a point south of Brookville Road and extending to Spring Street. It assumes that the Capital Crescent Trail will be on the north side next to the transitway. There are single-family homes and townhouses adjacent to the existing CSX tracks in this area. The single-family homes next to the tracks in the Woodside neighborhood are affected directly. In the CBD, the impacts would be greatest on the older complex of small brick offices owned by LDG – which could redevelop.

To address serious space constraints at the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building, the north side option could veer away from the existing CSX tracks possibly at the Spring Street Bridge and continue on Second Avenue to Wayne Avenue crossing Colesville Road on an overpass and then stopping at the Silver Spring Transit Center. This option would solve the space constraints at the Silver Spring Metro Plaza building, but would face the Cameron Hills townhouses on Second Avenue, as well as the Discovery Communications Headquarters. It could affect service access from Second Avenue for the Silver Spring Metro Plaza Building and the mixed-use component of the Silver Spring Transit Center development.

South Side Option

This option affects the households and businesses along the south side of the tracks between Brookville Road and Spring Street. In this option, the transitway could stay low at the same level as the existing CSX tracks, and pass by the single-family homes in the neighborhood and Rosemary Hills Elementary School. It could then rise gradually to cross 16th Street. Before that crossing, it would pass some additional single-family homes and then several apartment complexes. After that crossing, it would affect a strip shopping center. The shopping center site and its land use could be reevaluated and considered for redevelopment with a multi-family component while accommodating the light-rail transitway.

The light rail could then stay on the south side of the tracks until the Spring Street bridge, where it would cross in an elevated section and proceed to the Silver Spring Transit Center on the north side of the tracks in either of the ways described above, either veering off onto Second Avenue or remaining alongside the CSX tracks into the Silver Spring Transit Center.

This south side option also requires a study of how to continue the Capital Crescent Trail into the Silver Spring Transit Center and whether it would follow the transitway or remain along the north side of the tracks independently of the transit line.

Community Outreach and Feedback

Community outreach has included mailings in both English and Spanish, to civic associations along the alignment, meetings with umbrella organizations, advisory groups and a meeting with the City Council of the City of Takoma Park. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission website ([www. PurpleLine.org](http://www.PurpleLine.org)) with information and links to the Maryland Transit Administration site was publicized. An e-mail address (MCP-PurpleLine@mnccppc.org) for comments has also been publicized as well. Staff has also continued to coordinate with the Purple Line Coalition. Participants in the meetings had the option of providing written comments.

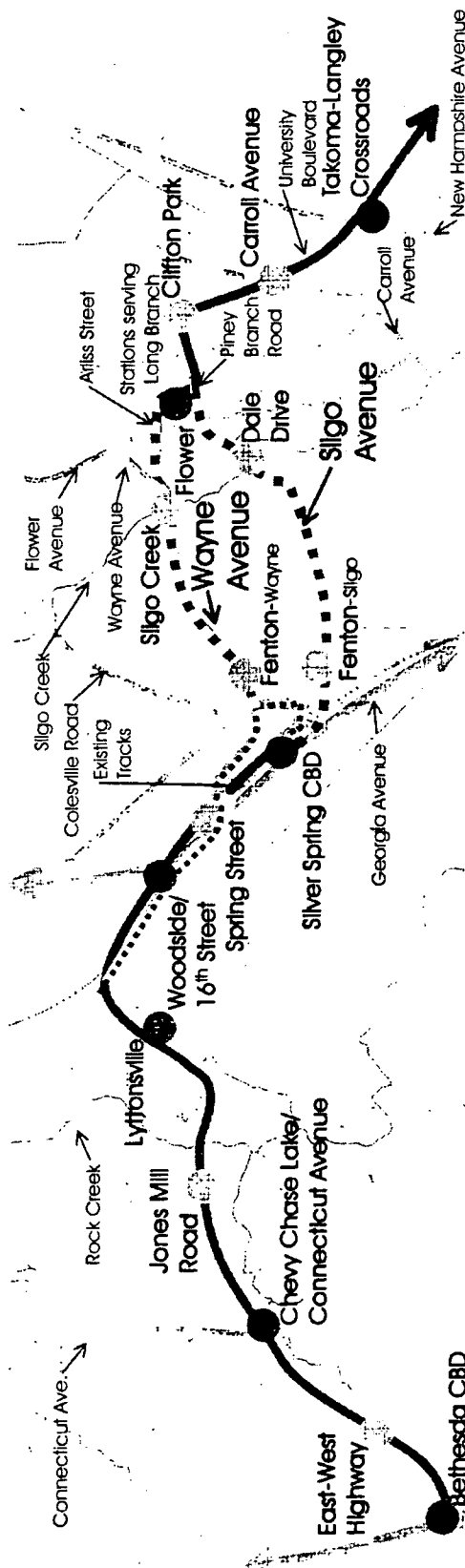
The feedback from the outreach clarified the need to evaluate both alternative alignments in the next stage. The participants raised many excellent questions. Many felt that they needed more information to make sound judgments regarding which alignment is preferable and suggested that both alignments be studied further. There were also questions about the merits of tunneling to avoid community impacts and about land use implications. Other questions concerned the likelihood of getting the Purple Line built. The results of community outreach and feedback are assembled in Exhibit C.

AH:MR:gw
Attachments

mno to MCPB re Purple Line.doc

Purple Line (Bi-County Transitway) Light Rail Transit Alignments Recommended by M-NCPPC Staff for Further Study

EXHIBIT A



- Stations
- Potential Future Stations
- Second Avenue Option
- Ripley & Georgia Avenue Option
- Georgetown Branch Master Plan + University Boulevard Alignment
- · — · — Southside of Track option
- · · · · Alternative Alignments
- Metrorail Red Line
- Prince George's County
- City of Takoma Park (Montgomery County)
- Montgomery County
- District of Columbia

Not to scale

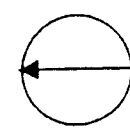


EXHIBIT A

EXHIBIT A

M-NCPPC
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL
CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING
COMMISSION
Montgomery County
9/23/04 MKR



Bi-County Transitway Project Area Montgomery County Alignments Being Reviewed by MTA for Selection for ARDS

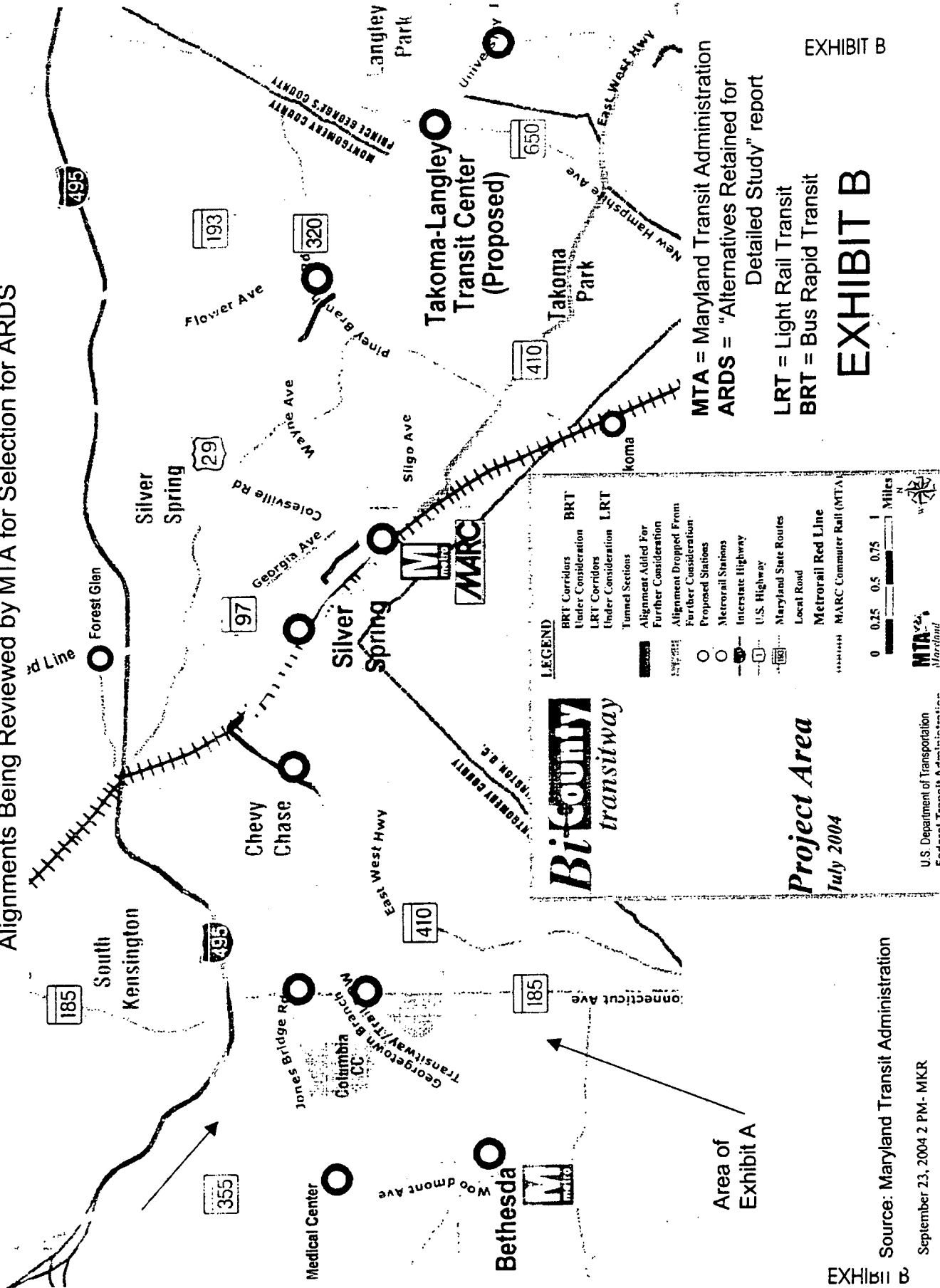


EXHIBIT B

MTA = Maryland Transit Administration
ARDS = "Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study" report

LRT = Light Rail Transit
BRT = Bus Rapid Transit

EXHIBIT B

EXHIBIT C

OUTREACH & FEEDBACK

- Summary of Outreach
- Notes & Written Comments from Outreach meetings
- Correspondence – E-mail and Postal



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

August 26, 2004

Dear Association Representative:

Are your members interested in influencing the proposed Purple Line? The Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council would like to know what light rail transit alignments citizens would like the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to select for further study connecting Bethesda with New Carrollton.

The Planning Board will be discussing this matter at a public hearing tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 30, 2004. The Planning Board will then advise the Montgomery County Council, which will make recommendations to the MTA.

The enclosed plan shows the light rail transit alignments being evaluated by the Planning Board's staff. You are invited to provide comments on the alignments and station locations via e-mail at MCP-PurpleLine@mncppc.org or by letter at:

Purple Line
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Additional information is available on our website: www.PurpleLine.org. It includes up-to-date information concerning testifying at the public hearing. Please let us know if you would like a translator.

Sincerely,

Margaret K. Rifkin, RLA AICP, Planner
Community-Based Planning Division
301/495-4583

Alex Hekimian, Planner
Countywide Planning Division
301/495-4531

MKR:AH:ha: a:\rifkin1\purple line

Enclosures:

Light Rail Alignments

Information from MTA on the Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING, 8787 GEORGIA AVENUE, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20910

www.mncppc.org

(14)



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

25 de Agosto de 2004

Estimado representante de Asociación:

¿Están los miembros de su asociación interesados en influenciar la propuesta de la Línea Morada (Purple Line)? La Junta Administrativa de Planificación del Condado de Montgomery y el Concejo del Condado quisieran saber los puntos de vista de sus ciudadanos en cuanto a las alineaciones de rieles de transporte que debiera seleccionar la Administración de Transporte de Maryland, (MTA por sus siglas en Inglés) para hacer más estudios relacionados con la conexión entre Bethesda y New Carrollton.

La Junta Administrativa de Planificación discutirá este asunto en una audiencia pública que está tentativamente programada para el jueves 30 de septiembre del 2004. Dicha Junta presentará en esta oportunidad un informe al Concejo del Condado, el cual hará las recomendaciones apropiadas a MTA.

El plan que incluimos muestra las alineaciones de rieles de transporte que están siendo evaluadas por miembros de la Junta Administrativa. Usted queda invitado a proporcionar comentarios sobre las mismas a través del Internet vía e-mail a MCP-PurpleLine@mncppc.org o por carta a:

Purple Line
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Tenemos más información disponible en nuestra página del Internet, www.PurpleLine.org. La más reciente información es sobre cómo testificar en una Audiencia Pública. Por favor infórmenos si necesita traductor.

Saludos cordials,

Margaret K. Rifkin, RLA AICP, Planner
Community-Based Planning Division
301 495 4583

Alex Hekimian, Planner
Countywide Planning Division
301 495 4531

Documento Anexo:

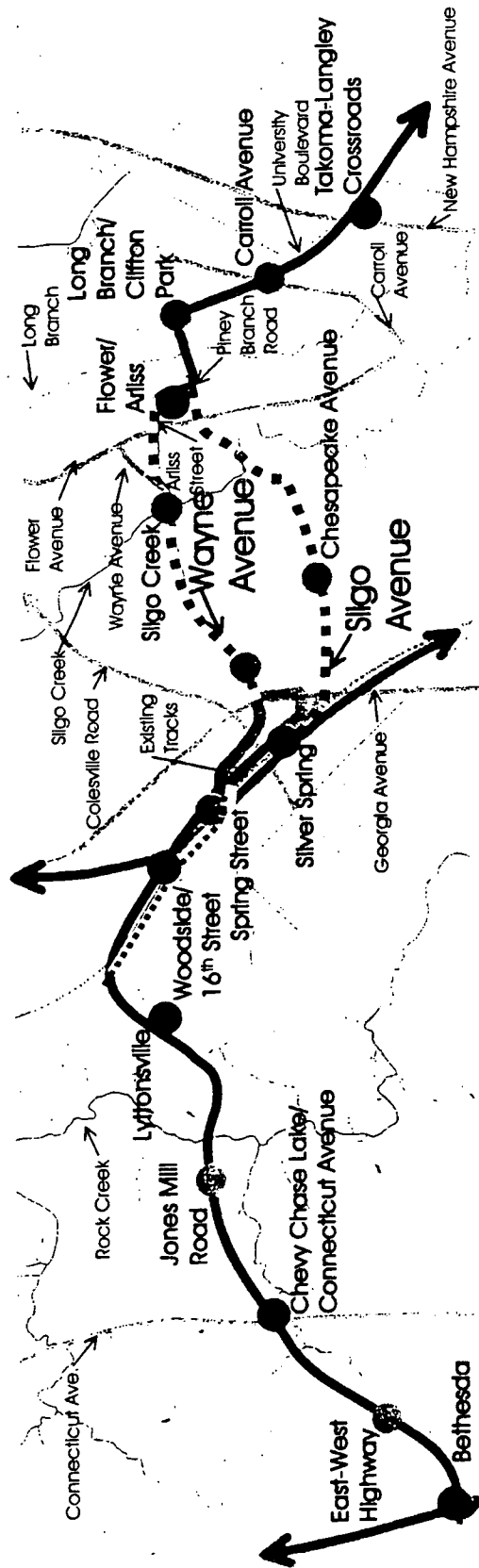
Plan de Alineación de Rieles de Transporte

Información de MTA sobre la Ruta de Transporte Bi-Condado (Línea Morada)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING, 8787 GEORGIA AVENUE, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20910

www.mncppc.org

Purple Line (Baltimore County Transitway) Light Rail Transit Alignments Under Evaluation by M-NCPPC Staff



- Stations**

 - Additional Stations to Study
 - Second Avenue Option
 - Ripley & Georgia Avenue Option
 - Georgetown Branch Master Plan + University Boulevard Alignment
 - . - . Southside of Track option
 - Alternative Alignments
 - Red Line
 - ▭ Prince George's County
 - ▭ City of Takoma Park (Montgomery County)
 - ▭ Montgomery County
 - ▭ District of Columbia

Not to scale

16

September 23, 2004

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH

Community outreach was conducted in response to the County Council's request. The goals of the outreach were twofold:

- To provide information to the public about the status of the work on the Purple Line and to inform them of opportunities for public participation.
- To gather insights from the public to provide the Montgomery County Planning Board and County Council with community perspectives to inform their recommendations.

In addition to scheduling the September 30th Public Hearing, The staff conducted the following outreach:

Meetings

Staff attended seven meetings in September with the following groups that represent various communities and businesses along the alignments:

- Allied Civic Group
- Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board
- Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Board
- City Council of the City of Takoma Park
- Takoma Langley Crossroads Development Authority
- Long Branch Task Force
- Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board

Staff invited representatives of Rosemary Hills Civic Association and Lyttonsville Civic Association to join the Allied Civic Group discussion.

Staff requested a meeting with the Presidents Council of Silver Spring Civic Associations.

Staff attended the regular meetings of the Purple Line Coalition and, additionally, met with the Coalition's leadership.

Mailings:

Staff mailed letters in both English and Spanish to all civic associations within ½ mile of the alignments inviting public participation and providing information.

Electronic:

Staff updated the existing M-NCPPC web page on the Purple Line (Bi-County

Transitway) and created an address for that page for easy access:
WWW.PurpleLine.org. Staff placed links to the page in appropriate locations
elsewhere on the website.

Staff created an e-mail address specifically for public comment: MCP-
PurpleLine.mncppc-mc.org

Staff requested that existing organizations provide links to the M-NCPPC Purple
Line website.

Press:

Staff sent press releases to local newspapers about the Planning Board's Public
Hearing.

Inter-jurisdictional Coordination:

Staff is also coordinating with the Bi-County Planning Group, which includes staff
from Prince George's County and the City of Takoma Park. Staff also set up a
separate Technical Work Group for coordination among local government staff.

Notes & Written Comments from Outreach Meetings

Allied Civic Group- 9/7/04

Staff present – Alex & Margaret

Notes:

Where would the alignment use Second Avenue? The Woodside Community is assuming the master plan alignment. Is cut and cover being considered? Which alignment serves the most people? What are the busway alternatives? How can Montgomery College be served? The Wayne Avenue alignment seems practical as long as it serves at least as many residents as the Sligo Avenue alignment. Does the Sligo Avenue alignment go under Georgia Avenue at Fenton Street? (Yes) Would the Wayne Avenue alignment result in rezoning from residential to commercial? Clarify the planners' assumptions on the future land uses.

Connect directly with the Silver Spring Transit Center. Stay true to the Master Plan. BRT will not get the same ridership as LRT. Minimize impact on neighborhoods by using Wayne Avenue. Wayne Avenue on the surface, would cause noise and community disruption. I like the Sligo Avenue alignment with underground sections to reduce noise. Could BRT serve both Wayne and Sligo at one time?

Written Comments:

Question: What do you think about the light rail alignments being evaluated?

"I agree that the LRT must connect to transit center. The Wayne Avenue alignment seems to be the best route to serve people who really need the service. Keep in mind the master plan changes that may occur/address early. I'm not a resident of Silver Spring. I would rely on comments from colleagues who live and know the neighborhood better. I would like to see more access/closer for Montgomery College."

"Do not think anyone's house should be lost for this project. Will Metro bear any of the costs? When will business owners (especially) and house owners be told that the current planned route might dramatically affect them? What type of cost projections would outweigh the benefits of the Purple Line? Since this is a relatively short route/line, why not got [sic] all out to keep the entire route above ground and thus make the cost(s) of doing this (in dollars, homes businesses significantly less).

"At this point I prefer Wayne Avenue alignment, since it has a wider ROW. (Minimizing impact on that neighborhood.) I also think the Purple Line train (LRT) would need to go through the transit center to maximize multi-modality. As to the second Avenue/Ripley choices, I'd be hesitant to comment since I don't know how it would look to have the tracks "fly-over" Colesville. It would be nice to support Montgomery College, but students will be inclined to use busses that could link to the nearby stations.

"What are your criteria – ie? Serve most number of commuting residents; reduce traffic; must connect to transit center. Wayne Avenue alignment seems more rational because adequate right of way already existing- will minimize impact on existing neighborhood. Can connect to College by small circulating loop bus. May R-60 units along major roads are gradually being converted to non-residential uses thru Sectional Map/Development Plan Amendments or Special Exceptions – consider status of houses along route in 5-7 years due to pressure of redevelopment. Trains/rail will have more ridership than buses."

"Minimizing impact on neighborhood would seem to favor Wayne Avenue. But serving college and larger group would favor Sligo. Above ground have negative impacts on neighborhood in either route. "

"Route should use existing track whenever possible. It doesn't make sense not to connect to the transit center-especially with the new investment. Wayne Avenue appears preferable based on wider right of way and potential impact on neighborhoods. Recommend tunneling as much as possible – cut and cover for cost reasons."

"I am in favor of the Sligo Avenue alignment, which I understand will be underground from Georgia Avenue to at least beyond Fenton Street. In order to minimize its effect on east Silver Spring, both in noise and property intrusion, I would encourage its continued underground construction. This route may also help provide closer public transportation facilities to the expanding Montgomery College campus – in particular if a station/stop is considered on the site of the present Police station [land that will become surplus public property when that facility moves out as proposed]. I am not in favor of the Wayne Avenue alignment, which apparently will require an unsightly, noisy overhead rail system through sections of the Silver Spring CBD. For example, such a system would have a negative [noise] impact on the proposed new library building and adjacent condominiums [currently under construction] on Wayne Avenue."

City of Takoma Park City Council – 9/7/04-

(A Resolution from the City is anticipated on September 27th.)

Staff Present – Alex and Margaret

Notes:

City Staff - The City had endorsed the Sligo Avenue alignment in the past. The Wayne Avenue alignment has fewer negative impacts than the Sligo Avenue alignment. The tentative date for the City of Takoma Park resolution is September 27.

Mayor Porter – Incorporate into the resolution the objectives of the Council. The Council would like to specify the station locations. Let neighborhoods react and drive the decision regarding which alignment.

Councilmember Elrich – Underground stations can be focal points for a community with retail activities and underground walkways. He is happy to see an alternative that takes fewer homes if the City could support it, everything else being equal.

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board-9/13/04-Written Comments

Staff Present – Margaret

Notes:

Several people felt that there is insufficient information at this time to state a preference for one alignment over the other. There were many questions. Are these where the only two alternatives being looked at and is the Bus Rapid Transit being considered as well? Are they on grade? Is it below ground or at grade? Will it be a light rail or a bus way? Will it be a double track or single? What is the significant impact in the neighborhoods in the area?

Elevated in front of Second Street may present a problem because of new courthouse just completed and also how would this impact the area? Wayne Avenue as you cross Georgia is a very highly congested area so how would you bring that through the area? Wayne Avenue beyond Whole Foods is wider than Sligo Avenue and Sligo Avenue beyond Fenton is a very narrow road so how could you put a light rail there without seriously impacting the community. How many bus rapid transit alternatives are being studied by the state?

There should be more stops in downtown Silver Spring and South Silver Spring. What are the principle pros and cons? ... The information presented does not give enough details to respond it would be very helpful to have the principle pros and cons of each route. Another citizen stated that in the next phase of the study you would get more detail.

On the east side of Silver Spring there seems to be fewer stations than on the west side.

Is the idea of staying on the railroad right-of-way all the way to Piney Branch a viable option? This would have the least residential impact.

Written:

Question: What do you think about the light rail alignments being evaluated?

"The options need to be further clarified with details of implementation.

Double track versus single track

Elevated versus surface or sub-surface

And overlay these with the physical/community impact limitations"

"I am excited that the county is looking into this matter promptly, particularly with regard to light rail. In particular, the Wayne Avenue option presents potential for disruption of the neighborhoods east of Sligo Avenue to University. We look forward to receiving significantly more information on this important subject. A single downtown Silver Spring stop sounds sufficient."

"My major concern relative to the routes is as follow:

- 1. Above ground on Wayne Avenue gong thru a residential area would not be environmentally acceptable.*
- 2. The cost of the Sligo Avenue route would appear to be great.*
- 3. The new courthouse might be adversely affected.*
- 4. Sligo Avenue route will promote economic development in downtown Silver Spring.*

"I recommend that both light rail alternatives be considered for further study. The Spring Street station is too close to the Woodside/16th Street station. Redistribute more stations to the east side of Silver Spring, which have a more [sic] desperately for transit."

Takoma-Langley Crossroads Development Authority –9/16/04

Staff Present – Alex & Margaret & Joel

Notes:

Support the Purple Line and concerned that it may not be built. Is the existing right of way on University Boulevard adequate for adding LRT? What is the proximity to Montgomery College? What is the reaction of the City of Takoma Park? A bus transit center is needed at Takoma Langley – will that make it even more difficult to put in LRT? What is the State's schedule? The State is pursuing BRT, is there any hope that LRT will be built? They are assuming that Bethesda to Silver Spring would be built first. Would like to know for certain which segment would be Phase I. Will intersections have traffic lights that affect LRT? This can affect the speed of the LRT. Is there any planning for pedestrian improvements in conjunction with the LRT?

Long Branch Task Force- 9/16/04

Staff Present – Alex & Margaret & Joel

Notes:

There were many questions; the comments favored building the Purple Line. Will there be parking at the stations? How much space is needed for a transit station? Glad to see both a Flower/Arliss Station and a Clifton Park Station (University Boulevard/Piney Branch Road.)

Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board – 9/20/04

Staff Present – Alex & Margaret

Notes:

Many questions: What quality will be the bike trail if the transitway is built – ie. How can one respond to trail users who are concerned about losing the trail? What is the access from the southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station? Will the Purple Line be built? It is a difficult project to implement. What are the costs? What are the funding expectations?

Written:

Question: What do you think about the light rail alignments being evaluated?

"This is an excellent idea, best of luck, how can citizens help and work on mitigation bikeway concerns."

"The old Georgetown Branch Trail should be a permanent hiker/biker trail and the Bi-County Transitway project should be dropped. With so many capital projects in the country, the number one priority should be the completion of Manhattan's Second Avenue subway line. In the O.C. area, it should be 8 car Metro rail trains & Metro rail extension to Loudon County, VA. Federal capital assistance is limited and slow start up projects should be dumped. MTA Light Rail makes sense because it runs through a major Central Business District (Baltimore). Build the ICC. "

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Board- 9/23/04

Staff present – Alex & Margaret

Notes:

Put a station on the Sligo Avenue alignment closer to Montgomery College to serve it, at Fenton Street.

What are prospects for funding?

LRT can be implemented rather quickly - consider looking into examples.

WMATA is examining LRT options for Prince George's County.

How many families might be displaced?

How much right of way is needed?

What kind of support is the M-NCPPC staff looking for?

What has been decided about the Bethesda to Silver Spring segment? That segment is the most important one to make the rest successful.

Why did the State change the project's name? This raises a question re whether or not the system is intended to connect to the Metro rail system – which is should do.

Unsure what to ask local government to do — perhaps to support LRT rather than BRT?

August 26, 2004

**Information from The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line)**

The Bi-County Transitway, previously named the Purple Line, is a proposed high capacity transit line along a 14-mile corridor between Bethesda in Montgomery County and New Carrollton in Prince George's County. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is conducting a study process for this project that follows Federal planning and environmental guidelines. This study is called an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS). In an effort to identify a cost effective solution for the corridor, the MTA is evaluating bus rapid transit and light rail transit alternatives along various alignment options.

The MTA is working closely with Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, M-NCPPC, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, State Highway Administration, and local municipalities in carrying out this study. The MTA also continues to assess public input and to encourage community participation in the study process.

As the MTA continues to refine and evaluate the alternatives still under consideration, it is nearing the point at which options are narrowed down to a reasonable set of alternatives that are then studied in further detail. This Definition of Alternatives phase will include an extensive effort to reach out to the community for input. Public meetings sponsored by the MTA are planned for later this fall along the corridor, and a recommended set of alternatives will be presented to the public. Those alternatives that are retained for detailed study will then be evaluated for their comparative effectiveness, environmental impacts, community impacts, transportation benefits and costs.

Dates and locations for the fall public meetings sponsored by the MTA will be announced in local papers and through mailings of a project newsletter. In the meantime, if you would like additional information on the project or if you want to make sure you are part of the mailing list, please visit the MTA-sponsored web site at www.bi-countytransitway.com. The MTA looks forward to hearing from citizens as the study advances.

Contacts at the Maryland Transit Administration:

Michael D. Madden, Project Manager
Maryland Transit Administration
6 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
(410) 767-3694

En español -Jose M. Vazquez
Maryland Transit Administration
8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 904
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
(301) 565-9665



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Project Name: Purple Line (Bi-County Transitway)

Bethesda to New Carrollton

Public Project



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Description: The Bi-County Transitway study by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) looks at transitway options for connecting Bethesda with New Carrollton via Silver Spring. The transitway has also been known as the Purple Line. The MTA is looking at a variety of alternatives, including bus rapid transit; routes other than the Georgetown Branch right-of-way; and using portions of existing roads. Several reports are being released in 2004: "Purpose and Needs", "Scoping Report", and draft "Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study" (ARDS). The ARDS and subsequent detailed study of alternatives are scheduled for 2005-2006. The ARDS is the most important step in determining what routes will be studied and whether they will be bus or rail.

>See Map of Purple Line Alignmentpdf..... gif.....PowerPoint

M-MCPC Staff Contact:

Alex Hekimian, (301) 495-4531, e-mail

Margaret K. Rifkin, (301) 495-4583, e-mail

Applicant:

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)- Mike Madden (410) 767-3694, e-mail and Andy Scott (301) 565-9665, e-mail

The MTA website has current detailed information.

Opportunities for Public Participation:

The Planning Board is planning to provide recommendations to the County Council and the MTA concerning which alternatives should be retained for detailed study and so included in the draft ARDS. For this reason, there has been public outreach including letters to Civic Associations in English and in Spanish which were sent out in August. There will be a public hearing at the Planning Board Thursday, September 30, 2004 (click on this link to see the press release). **This item is scheduled for the afternoon.**

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To see the agenda, please click on the **tab** at the top of this page titled **"Weekly Agenda"** and follow the cues. To view the staff report which will be posted by 5:00 P.M. Monday September 27, do the same. Hard copies of the staff report are available on Monday at M-NCPPC, in the Transportation Division, on the first floor, at 8787 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.

After the Draft ARDS is released, the MTA is planning to conduct public outreach to receive input on the document. This is likely to take place between late Fall 2004 and Spring 2005.

Planning Board Review Process:

Advisory comments during the process. Mandatory Referral at a future time.

Planning Board Actions:

Notes From M-NCPPC Staff Contact:

The County Council Transportation and Environment Committee is scheduled to discuss the Planning Board's recommendations on October 4th, 2004. The County Council will discuss them on October 5th, 2004.

Page Last Updated: September 24, 2004/ MKR

Contact the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team

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Montgomery County Planning Board
Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning
The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
www.mc-mncppc.org

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THE CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
ESTABLISHED 1890

EDWARD HALL ASHER
PRESIDENT
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Derick P. Berlage
Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

September 22, 2004

RE: Bi-County Transitway - Planning Board Worksession, September 30, 2004

Dear Mr. Berlage:

As President of the Chevy Chase Land Company of Montgomery County (the "Land Company"), I would like to reiterate our unwavering support for the alignment of the Inner Purple Line, or the Bi-County Transitway (the "Transitway"), on the Georgetown Branch right-of-way alignment, as has been recommended in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan and which has already been the subject of substantial design, planning and environmental analyses. As I have stated in the past, the Land Company very strongly believes that the proposed light rail transit connection of the Bethesda CBD and the Silver Spring CBD within the existing Georgetown Branch right-of-way is the most critical, significant, feasible and readily available transit opportunity for the County and the region for the foreseeable future. The review of alternative proposed plans for the Transitway which do not include this master-planned connection are infeasible, impractical, and detrimental to the quality of life and economic health of this County, and only serve to delay and perhaps eliminate the implementation of this vital transit project. I urge the Planning Board to continue to recommend to the County Council and the Maryland Transit Administration ("MTA") that light rail transit along the Georgetown Branch right-of-way be the only alternative for study in the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study ("ARDS") for the portion of the transitway between the Bethesda CBD and Silver Spring. Studying other alternatives only perpetuates politically motivated tactics to preclude the light rail transit from crossing Columbia Country Club, so please do not fall prey to these thinly veiled tactics.

As the Planning Board is well aware (and has found on numerous occasions), the Georgetown Branch alignment is consistent with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan, the Georgetown Branch Master Plan and the Bethesda CBD Master Plan. The Georgetown Branch alignment of the Transitway is consistent with the Master Plan objectives to use the existing right-of-way purchased specifically for a light rail and trail project, to maintain Jones Bridge Road as a primary residential street, to locate a transit station at the Chevy Chase Lake East commercial and residential area, to locate a terminal station inside the Bethesda CBD, and to provide a southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station and a connection to the light rail as

THE CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
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part of the transit project. Further, all the design plans of the MTA demonstrate that the shared use of the right-of-way for light rail and hiker-biker can be accommodated safely, effectively and efficiently, allowing dual purpose of moving pedestrians, bicyclists and the transit users in a manner which cannot be matched anywhere else in this region. The Land Company also strongly supports this dual use.

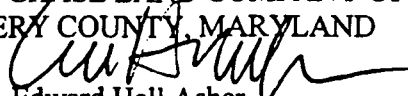
The Land Company has particularly strong reasons for its support of the Transitway on the Georgetown Branch alignment. First, it is the fee simple owner of a significant portion of the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, an easement having been conveyed by the Land Company for east-west rail movement several decades ago. Second, the Land Company is probably the oldest, family-owned corporate citizen of this County with over 100 years of history and commitment to the economic well being of this area, and we believe the Transitway on the Georgetown Branch alignment is significant to continue the success story of Chevy Chase and its surrounds. Third, the Land Company has always developed its properties and maintained them consistent with comprehensive master plans and would expect the public officials controlling transportation decisions to do the same. Fourth, the Land Company has made significant investment in transit oriented locations in the County which will further be benefited by better transit, and the Land Company intends to continue its investment in the County and region for generations to come. We thus have a highly vested interest in good decision-making today which will produce longstanding benefits for our future.

In conclusion, we urge the Planning Board and the County Council to keep the best interests of the public-at-large and continue to recommend to the MTA to keep the Transitway as a light rail transit and trail line within the Georgetown Branch alignment (the very right-of-way provided for by the Land Company decades ago) for the portion of the Transitway between the Bethesda CBD and the Silver Spring CBD. The Georgetown Branch alignment for a light rail transitway is the logical, long-planned, feasible and beneficial transit improvement that will link the two major commerce, residential and arts and entertainment districts within Montgomery County, and which will consequently link Montgomery County and Prince Georges County (including the University of Maryland). The ability to finish the design and studies, construct and implement the Bethesda to Silver Spring portion of the Transitway is critical to provide relief to the residents, employees and visitors in Montgomery County and the region that are sitting in their cars on congested roads with few improvements available to improve vehicular east-west travel in this region. In short, this transit project is critically necessary to sustain the amenities, economy and quality of life in Montgomery County.

Thank you for your consideration and your anticipated recommendations.

Very truly yours,

THE CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY OF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND


Edward Hall Asher
President

THE CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
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cc: Members, Montgomery County
Planning Board
Steven A. Silverman, President,
Montgomery County Council
Alex Hekimian
M-NCPPC – Countywide Transportation Planning
Margaret K. Rifkin
M-NCPPC – Community Based Planning

The Honorable Steven A. Silverman
President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, Sixth Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive for Montgomery County
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
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4 other Planning Board Members:

Ms. Wendy Purdue, Vice-Chair
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8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Mr. Allison Bryant, Member
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
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Ms. Meredith Wellington, Member
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Mr. John Robinson, Member
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Rifkin, Margaret

From: Sue Knapp [sknapp@kfhgroup.com]
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2004 2:38 PM
To: Rifkin, Margaret
Cc: Thon, Karen; Deborah Snead
Subject: Western Mont Co CAB

Margaret,

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me. Attached are the questions we prepared on the Purple Line.

I understand now that these questions and concerns are more applicable to the broader MTA study, rather than what you will be presenting on the 20th -- and that the outreach process that MTA is conducting for Bi-County Transitway study will cover these questions. But, if you can include a little of the history and where we are now in the process in your presentation next Monday, it probably will help the CAB be more effective in providing input to the MTA study.

Give me a call if you have any questions.
Sue

Sue Knapp
President
KFH Group, Inc
4920 Elm Street, Suite 350
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 951-8660
(301) 951-0026 (fax)
sknapp@kfhgroup.com

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9/13/2004

Transportation Committee Question on the Purple Line

1. History

It appears that MTA's Bi-County Transitway Study is looking at new alternatives for the Purple Line including substituting bus for rail (BRT), new routes other than the Georgetown Branch ROW, using portions of existing roads. According to the May 2004 Scoping Report, MTA is now only studying BRT and LRT but is still including the PLL.

It would be useful to have a re-cap of the history of the Purple Line (Bi-County Transitway) development. What has been proposed? What currently is being recommended by the County Executive, Park and Planning? How do these differ from the MTA alternatives being studied?

2. Status of the MTA Study/Report?

Where are we in the process? Is MTA still in the scoping phase? If so, how does this relate to the May 2004 "Scoping Report"? The **Project Schedule** on the Bi-County Transitway website indicates that the scoping process will be completed in Fall 2004 – when the definition of alternatives phase would start. The **Environmental Studies and Documentation** section of the website indicates that we are still in the scoping process.

How is MTA addressing concerns expressed by the public at the Fall 2003 scoping meetings:

- opposition to the BRT concept,
- opposition to alignments along Jones Bridge Road,
- opposition to at-grade alignments and crossings,
- concerns about trail and environmental issues (compatibility of transit along the trail and preservation of the trail with the development of transit in the corridor)?

Is there more opportunity for comments before the draft Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) is released (or has it already been released)? It appears that the final ARDS and actual study of alternatives is scheduled for 2005-2006.

The Park and Planning map indicates only the light rail alignment – is it possible to produce a map with the various BRT alignments (in the scoping report p. 7)? Also, is it also possible to produce maps specifying the various sections:

- BRT alignments that are shared or dedicated,
- LRT alignment that are at-grade versus tunnel and aerial.

3. Detailed Discussion of Inner Purple Line (IPL) and Purple Line Loop (PLL)

- Integration of the Purple Line into the Existing Metrorail system – We would value a discussion relationship between the IPL and PLL and our existing rail system. Will the PLL and/or the IPL lend itself to improving the entire rail system so that it will serve even a greater number of people in the long run. Versus just serving some more narrowly defined interests. The comment that PLL could eventually reach Tysons Corner is very powerful. Is the IPL capable of having that reach. Also more discussion of the pros and cons of having two different systems with two different technologies, workshops etc. would be helpful.
- Impact on walking and biking trail - The IPL impact on the walking/biking trail needs to be explored further. Have the users of the trail been surveyed? Is the degrading of the trail, mentioned in the Park and Planning study, minimal, medium, or considerable? This is a great county facility. We need to know more about impact.
- Crossing at Connecticut Avenue - At one stage, the plan was to have the IPL cross Connecticut at grade, not above it or below it. Is this still the case in LRT Option A and/or B? If yes, what is the impact of such a design?
- The value placed on less delay, i.e., IPL could go forward faster than PLL because it is further along in the planning/study phase, is entirely misplaced. We should be deciding on what is best, not what is quickest.

4. How can (should) the CAB be involved in the public review process? What is useful to Park and Planning and MTA to facilitate public input?

MCP-PurpleLine

From: Wayne Phyllaier [wphylla@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, September 19, 2004 6:14 PM
To: MCP-PurpleLine
Subject: Purple Line and CCT

Dear M-NCPPC Chairman Berlage, and planning staff:

I am writing to urge you to evaluate the impact of a Purple Line "no CSX" alignment upon the Capital Crescent Trail.

By "no CSX" alignment, I mean an alignment that does not build the Purple Line transit/trail along the CSX corridor between Lyttonsville and downtown Silver Spring.

When I served upon the citizens advisory committee to the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan several years ago, I was advised by Mr. Tom Robertson, M-NCPPC Transportation Planner (now retired), that M-NCPPC had written to CSX Corporation to ask what their conditions would be to permit the CCT to be built in CSX controlled property. Mr. Robertson advised CSX had responded in a letter that they would not consider allowing any trail to be built within CSX controlled property. CSX has more recently indicated, in a letter to Secretary of Transportation Flanagan, that CSX will discuss the possibility of building a Purple Line transit/trail project within their right-of-way. Thus it would appear that the CCT will be built within CSX controlled property only if it is part of a transit project. This has enormous implications for the CCT. The planned alignment for the CCT into downtown Silver Spring is within the CSX right-of-way because this is the only alignment that can give a direct, off-road trail with grade separated crossings of the major streets and a seamless connection to the MetBranch Trail through the transit station.

Trail supporters cannot fairly evaluate Bi-county Transitway impacts upon the CCT without having a realistic assessment of what the CCT will be like if it must be built without the benefit of transit gaining access to the CSX right-of-way. M-NCPPC should verify the CSX position on building the CCT without transit within their property. M-NCPPC planners should then assess the best CCT that can be completed into downtown Silver Spring under that condition. This would not need to be an exhaustive study - much exploration of alignment options in this area has been performed and reported in the "Facility Plan for the Capital Crescent & Metropolitan Branch Trails" approved by the Planning Board in January 2001. But this facility plan only recommended interim options and did not address the issue "What if we have to build the final trail without transit?"

At the present time trail supporters are being shown a very selective picture of the impact of the Purple Line on the CCT by transit opponents. Transit opponents describe the CCT in east Bethesda as though it is representative of the entire CCT between Bethesda and downtown Silver Spring, largely ignoring the difficult problems associated with completing the trail. They portray transit as having only negative impacts upon the CCT. Trail supporters need to be able to evaluate the impact of transit options upon the entire CCT, into the Silver Spring Transit Center. Transit supporters need to know what the trail will be like into downtown Silver Spring if transit is not built. I believe that when the whole trail is considered fairly, many trail supporters will agree with me that building transit will bring very strong benefits to the CCT in Silver Spring.

Sincerely,
Wayne Phyllaier
12 Grace Church Court
Silver Spring, MD 20910

MCP-PurpleLine

From: Kathy Jentz [nssea@nssea.org]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 4:35 PM
To: MCP-PurpleLine
Cc: sconnelly5@juno.com
Subject: Purple Line feedback

Since I won't be able to attend the 9/30 meeting - I just wanted to voice my support for the Sligo Ave. alternative WITH a stop at Chesapeake Ave. - that area has a number of low and mid-income apartment buildings and developments.

Also wanted to support the Georgetown Branch right-of-way -- discussing any other route from downtown SS to Bethesda is patently ridiculous.

Sincerely,
Kathy Jentz
Silver Spring MD 20910

(34)

9/23/2004

MCP-PurpleLine

From: Sean Lawton [slawton@math.umd.edu]
Sent: Monday, September 20, 2004 1:44 PM
To: MCP-PurpleLine
Subject: Purple Line

To whom it may concern:

I am a citizen of MC and an avid user of public transit. I strongly support the purple line and hope that it becomes a reality sooner than latter.

- Sean Lawton

.....
Teaching Assistant, UMCP

Phone: 301-405-5047

Lecturer, MCCC

Fax: 301-314-0827

Undergraduate Advisor, UMCP

slawton@math.umd.edu

4308 Math Building, UMCP

www.math.umd.edu/~slawton
.....

Kreger, Glenn

From: Sean Lawton [slawton@math.umd.edu]
To: Iraola, Miguel; Kreger, Glenn; Gallihue, Joel
Cc:
Subject: Purple Line
Attachments:

Sent: Fri 9/17/2004 6:47 PM

Dear Purple Line correspondents:

I am a resident of Silver Spring and have recieved a notice soliciting responses to the proposed purple line.

As an avid user of public transit, I could not be happier to see progress under way for this line. There has been a large need for a very long time for a line to follow the beltway. Without such there is one more reason not to use public transit. I am always amazed that it takes me three to four times the time to go to Bethesda from Silver Spring by train as it would to drive.

I am a strong supporter of this endeavor and would be more than happy to have my tax dollars go to support its inception and upkeep.

Sincerely,

Sean Lawton

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Introduced By: Councilmember Elrich

RESOLUTION #2004-46

**Resolution Providing Additional Comments on Route and Stop Locations
Near Takoma Park for the Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line)**

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park has consistently supported increased mass transit service for the Takoma Park community and has endorsed a bi-county light rail transit system for several years as evidenced by City Council Resolutions 2000-38, 2003-4, and 2003-53; and

WHEREAS, if properly designed, the Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line) will promote the revitalization of the business and residential communities through which it passes, will help address traffic congestion in many of the most densely populated communities in Maryland, and will provide much improved access for lower-income residents, college students and others who have few alternative forms of transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council specifically supports permanent transit stations in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads and Long Branch areas to serve area residents and assist in revitalization efforts; and

WHEREAS, such transit stations should be attractive and well-designed, provide adequate accommodations for waiting passengers and provide for safe and sufficient connections to and from the site for pedestrians, bike riders, and bus patrons; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is researching route and mode options for the Bi-County Transitway in order to identify the alternatives to be retained for detailed study this coming winter; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County planning staff have been directed to identify light rail transit routes through Montgomery County which the Montgomery County Council may recommend to MTA to include in its Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study Technical Report; and

WHEREAS, two light rail routes east of the Silver Spring Transit Center, with stops in the Long Branch area and at the Takoma/Langley Crossroads, are being studied by MTA and Montgomery County planners:

- *Sligo Avenue Route.* From the Silver Spring Transit Station, east on Sligo Avenue (with a possible stop at Chesapeake Avenue), north on Piney Branch Road (with a possible stop at Dale Drive), north to a Long Branch station near Flower Avenue, north to University Boulevard

- *Wayne Avenue Route.* From the Silver Spring Transit Station, northeast on Wayne Avenue (with possible stops at Fenton Street and near Sligo Creek), underground after Manchester Road to Arliss Street to a Long Branch station, north along Piney Branch Road to University Blvd

either route would turn southwest onto University Boulevard (with possible stops at Piney Branch and at Carroll Avenue) to a station at Takoma/Langley Crossroads and then continue west on University Boulevard into Prince George's County; and,

WHEREAS, either route will serve the Takoma Park and Long Branch communities; and

WHEREAS, while both routes could accommodate either a light rail or bus rapid transit vehicle, light rail is a preferred mode due to its greater economic development potential (installation of fixed rail assures investors of the permanence of transit service) and to its potential inter-connectivity and shared efficiencies with the District of Columbia's light rail system under development, for which a Georgia Avenue line is proposed to extend to the Silver Spring Transit Center; and

WHEREAS, as further study is done on the routes and possible station locations, priority should be given to routes that minimize the taking of residential buildings and best serve densely populated communities and area commercial districts; and

WHEREAS, master plan amendments are required for the Montgomery and Prince George's County communities along the bi-county transit route east of the Silver Spring Transit Center because neither the transit route nor land use implications of the transit route are detailed in current master plans; and

WHEREAS, a master plan process will allow thorough study and community outreach and participation regarding routes, stops and land uses near those routes and stops; and

WHEREAS, close coordination is needed between Montgomery and Prince George's Counties concerning planning for the Takoma/Langley Crossroads station and surrounding land uses on both sides of the county line.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Takoma Park City Council :

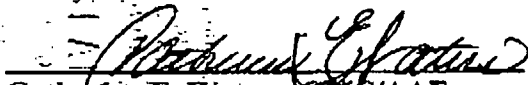
1. **Supports continued study of the Sligo Avenue and Wayne Avenue routes for a bi-county transit system.**
2. **Strongly supports stations at both Long Branch and Takoma/Langley Crossroads.**
3. **Urges, when choices between routes are possible, that priority be given to routes that minimize the taking of residential buildings and best serve densely populated**

communities and area commercial districts.

4. Recommends a light rail system, rather than bus rapid transit, because of its greater benefits in the areas of economic development, inter-connectivity and operating efficiencies.
5. Requests that the Montgomery County Council and the Prince George's County Council direct their respective Planning Boards to open the master plans along the proposed route(s) of the bi-county transit line so that thorough study of the routes, stops and land uses can be made through a process of significant community outreach and participation.
6. Urges that in identifying transit station locations, planners provide for adequate space for safe, attractive passenger waiting areas; and for safe access to and from the site by pedestrians, bike riders, bus patrons and users of other modes of transportation.

ADOPTED THIS 27th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2004

ATTEST:


Catherine E. Waters, CM/C/AAE
City Clerk/Treasurer